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A N S W E R
TO THE
REV. WILLIAM EMBURY EDWARDS'S
L E T T E R
TO THE OCCASIONAL PREACHERS
A T
PORTLAND CHAPEL.

BY SAMUEL BRADBURN,
ONE OF THOSE PREACHERS.

The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Jam. i. 20.

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REVEREND SIR,

W H E N I read your advertisement in the Newspaper, I expected your Letter, "To the occasional Preachers at Portland-Chapel," would contain some weighty arguments against our Doctrines, Discipline, or Authority to preach. I imagined you were wholly unacquainted with the people called Methodists, and that (as has often been our case) you considered us as Heretics, and would treat us as such are usually treated. Upon mentioning this to some friends, they informed me, that you were well acquainted with the Methodists, and upon very friendly terms with many of them, that you were an awakened Clergyman, and a very good Preacher. Two of our people told me, they really believed you had been justified, and that you enjoyed the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. Whether these accounts be true, and that you were once thus holy, happy and zealous for God, or, whether, in the fulness of their love to you, they gave

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you credit for what they sincerely wished, I do not take upon me to say. But these accounts raised you high in my esteem, and I concluded that a Gentleman of your rank,—*a converted Minister*, would certainly write nothing but what was strictly true, and that I should meet with nothing in the spirit of your book but the Gentleman, the Scholar, and the CHRISTIAN. —How much I was disappointed in my expectations, will appear to every person of discernment that carefully reads your pamphlet. The spirit of your Letter is the worst thing in it. Every thing that is like argument, I can easily answer; but the *illiberal design*, the *arrogant conceit*, and the *thinly-disguised malevolence*, that runs through the whole piece, give me great pain. Not, Sir, I assure you, on my own account, but your's! Had you known any of us, or only condescended to send one of your servants, to say, you desired to speak with us on the subject in debate, you might have had full satisfaction. If we refused your invitation, or proved incorrigible when admonished by you, you would have had some excuse for publicly addressing us *without any apology*. I could the more easily have satisfied you on most of the points you dwell on in your letter, as it is not above two months since I published a pamphlet directly to the purpose. As you, for reasons known to yourself,

declined

declined giving us an opportunity of explaining ourselves to you without troubling the public, and have come forth the unprovoked aggressor in the present dispute, I feel it my duty to take this method to defend myself and brethren, and I call upon you, Sir, to answer God and your own conscience, for giving me this trouble, and intruding upon that time, which, but for you, might have been much better employed.

You acknowledge the necessity of building a place of worship on the hill. And, if we may judge by the places you have mentioned, we have been providentially directed to the most convenient spot. Herein we see the goodness of our gracious God, and desire to be truly thankful. If in this circumstance our friends have offended you, you must own it was not with design. Their intention to build, was known to you a considerable time before they fixed on the situation. How easily might you have precluded their having that place, by taking the ground yourself! But you suffered a frigid caution to damp the ardency of your zeal. And although you own the harvest was plentiful and the labourers few, yet Captain Webb was permitted to put in his sickle and begin the work, while you remained doubtful in regard to the season. Was he not to be highly commended for so doing?

The Captain is an old labourer. He knew that harvest time is very precious. Even a day's delay may be the cause of great damage to the crop, if not its entire destruction. I doubt not but you are Farmer enough to know, that on some high grounds, the corn is in as great danger of being lost, when it is fully ripe, as at any time of its growth. I have known the wind rise so high on a sudden in the Northern parts of this kingdom, as to shake all the grain out of the ears before it could be cut down, and thereby disappoint the hopes of the owner, when the very moment of enjoyment was at hand. The apprehension, therefore, of an hurricane, makes the Farmers in those parts very anxious when the time of reaping approaches. And I cannot help thinking, that a truly faithful labourer in the Gospel, will be as much in earnest to save the souls of men, as an husbandman is to secure a little corn. Whatever *caution* you may suppose Captain Webb wanted, it is certain he had great zeal, and his endeavours have been crowned with great success. He has been concerned in building several Chapels, and has acted from the purest motives, motives which you cannot even suspect, without betraying a want of that love which thinketh no evil.

But

But let us proceed to examine your letter.

In page 4, you tell us, "There is a labour peculiar to the parochial minister." And by the manner of your mentioning, "The admission of members into the Christian Church, the solemnization of matrimony, the visitation of the sick, and the burial of the dead," you seem to consider yourself, and other parochial ministers, as having an exclusive right to perform these duties! If you mean this, (and I see no sense in the passage if you mean any thing else) I shall in a little time, please God, exemplify a very different doctrine. We have prepared a *communion table*, and we have a very convenient *burying-place*, both of which we mean to use in due time. I shall certainly baptize the children of any of our people who desire it, and give thanks to God with the good women after their deliverance in child-bearing. And as to visiting the sick, it is scarcely possible to think you serious, when you talk of that, as one of the claims which a parochial minister would not relinquish, since it is well known, that it is, in general, a very difficult matter, to get one of them to visit a sick person, especially if the person be *poor*! We, Sir, have proofs in abundance of this, in every town in England. And I shall never refuse, at a convenient time, to visit any sick person that may

send for me, because they live in the same parish with *you*! Nay, if *you* should be sick, and send for me, though you seem so cross, I would visit you, and give you all the comfort in my power. And little as you may think of this, the time may come when even you, Sir, may be glad to accept such an offer. The solemnization of matrimony we shall not interfere with. We do not consider you, when thus employed, in a religious capacity, but as an officer of the state. You cannot be ignorant that in some parts of his Majesty's dominions, this business is done by Justices of the Peace. And it is viewing you in this civil light, that enables the Dissenters to submit to have this ceremony performed for them by episcopal ministers. In every thing that relates to the office of Ministers of Jesus Christ, I consider myself as standing on equal ground with you, and facts will convince you, that I hold my claims as sacred as your's, and that I *dare not*, and *will not* relinquish them. If, when our Conference is assembled, we see good, for our own convenience, to lay aside for a season, any of our privileges, or, if our people in particular places, chuse to submit to have the ordinances from an episcopalian, we still hold fast our right, and exercise it when we think it expedient. Herein we become all things to all men.

What

What you say, page 5. about your being *no bigot*, I should not have touched upon, only for the curious proof you give in the following part of your letter. Thus, in page 6. you call our mode of worship an "UNWARRANTABLE USURPATION," by which you seem to mean, that by our worshipping God according to the dictates of our consciences, we have illegally seized the rights of other people. Give me leave, Sir, to ask, whose rights have we seized? what have we usurped? Have we violated any of the laws of God or our Country by any thing we have done in our mode of worship? 'Till you prove that we have, I shall consider you as making unwarrantably free with your neighbour, and using language very unbecoming a good man. And I would advise you to be a little more guarded in your assertions, lest you should grieve the Spirit of God, and bring darkness upon your own soul.

But you "suspect something very defective in the principle." To *suspect* men's principles without sufficient reason, is no proof of a liberal mind. You have had no opportunity of knowing our principles; consequently you can, at least, but *surmise*, and your surmisings, in the present case, being false, how can you escape the Apostle's censure, 1 Tim. 6. 4? Do
you

you really think, Sir, that you can serve the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ by thus suspecting the principles of your Brethren? and then without giving them any previous notice, publishing your uncharitable suspicions to the world? Will this mode of proceeding afford you any solid comfort on a sick bed, or in a dying hour? Can you lay your hand upon your heart, and appeal to your Maker, that herein you have acted towards us, as you would we should act towards you? What if I should catch your spirit, and follow your example, (which Heaven forefend!) and tell the world, that I suspect your fear of our being thought as good Preachers as yourself, or lest you should sustain some pecuniary loss on our account, is the cause of your having troubled the world with your letter to us? Would you think me kind, thus to suspect you, when you were conscious before God, that no such fear ever had any place in you? You know, Sir, in such a case, you would feel yourself aggrieved.

You, perhaps think yourself at liberty to treat us in the manner you have done, because some of us put on the " sacerdotal vestments; the surplice, the band, and the gown." But why should this be deemed a crime? You know we have as good a right to wear them as you have. Shew me any Law of God, or

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of England which forbids us, and we will wear them no more. If there be no such Law, who are you, that you should find fault? Suppose by wearing these vestments we should get a few more hearers, and that some of these hearers should be benefited by our ministry, would that be any lessening of your joy in the day of the Lord? I have occasionally preached in a gown and band these many years, and sometimes read the prayers in a surplice, and you are the first that ever unwarrantably usurped the right of calling me to account for so doing. To say the truth, I have felt great reluctance to do this, and gave up my own will merely to please the people I preached to. And this was actually the case the day I opened Portland-Chapel, But I dare not say, either that I did wrong, or that I will do so no more. I do not, for my own sake, care what sort of vestments I preach in, if I can but be useful. But I think it sinful to allow any number of men, merely because of external habiliments, the exclusive right of being called *the Clergy*, or *the Ministers of the Gospel*. By my sometimes wearing the clerical dress, and occasionally using the term Reverend, I bear a testimony against such a deception. And I apprehend this is the reason why so many of the Dissenters put on the gown, and use this title.

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With respect to our "best intentions being construed into sad hypocrisy," as though we wished our hearers to think we were Episcopal Ministers, this is only another of your unkind suspicions. I have been well known in Bristol these many years, and I do not believe one person that attended Portland-Chapel when I opened it, conceived I was any other than a Methodist-Preacher; If any thought otherwise at first, they were certainly undeceived when they heard my sermon.*

What you say relative to our using the Church service is truly surprising. Your words are, page 6. "You may, perhaps, be allowed to admire the Liturgy, by reading the morning and evening prayers," And pray, Sir, who is to grant us this permission? Is not admiration an emotion of the soul, excited by the understanding contemplating some new, or grand object? If I closely examine the Liturgy of the Church, (as I do parts of it almost every day) and if the wisdom and piety of the Compilers appear to my mind to have been very great, and if the Composition, upon the whole, appear excellent, must I ask leave of you, Sir, or any one upon earth to admire either the Men, or the Book? And surely you do not expect us to crave your permission to read the Prayers! Thank God

* Which I purpose soon to print.

God for the Civil Powers, which authorize us to read both them and the Scriptures, without becoming subject to your jurisdiction.

You proceed: " If there were no *design*, either in putting on the habit, or in using the form, let me only ask you, why not follow the same plan at your room in Broadmead?" And let me only ask you in turn, what kind of reasoning this is? suppose we did follow the same plan at the room, would that make any difference with respect to our *design* on the hill? That we have a *design* is certain, and that in every thing we do, if we be not fools, and so have you too. But I know not that you have any business to ask impertinent questions concerning our *design*. However, lest you should *suspect* something more than is real, I will simply tell you what I know of the matter. When Mr. Wesley (who was at first the sole proprietor) settled the room in the hands of Trustees, he was but little acquainted with the nature of such settlements. He would fain have had it settled in a different way afterward, and strove all he could to accomplish his desire, but found it impracticable. The Trustees thought it inconsistent with their trust to let any alteration be made. You say they are Dissenters: they consider themselves as Church-men, and imagine, that
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by keeping the room shut in Church-hours, you will give them credit for the sincerity of their profession. I leave you and them to settle that point, as a matter of perfect indifference to me; but this is the cause of divine service not being there in Church-time. When a new Chapel was proposed, care was taken that no such restrictions should be laid upon either Preachers or People. Many excellent members of our Society wished to hear their own Ministers on the Lord's day, at those hours which are most convenient, that they might not be obliged either to lounge at home, or to hear doctrines they did not believe. Those are now gratified; and I hope they will improve their opportunities and be thankful. The Lord has given us great proofs of his love already: Portland-Chapel is well attended, and I doubt not but it will prove a blessing to many. No wonder therefore that the common Enemy should stir up some to oppose it.

Why Mr. Wesley did not establish the same mode every where, may be easily gathered from the nature of his first plan, which at present I cannot enlarge upon, as I have so lately published it, in a pamphlet entitled, "the Question, are the Methodists Dissenters,
fairly

fairly examined." Suffice it to observe, that the prejudices of man are not easily removed, nor do all the professors of our holy religion regard the general good in preference to their own pride and interest. Hence many improvements in all communities are brought forward slowly. A few in various places, who have been accustomed to rule, when they see the work extending, and necessary alterations required, soon experience that a division of their power must be the consequence. This they have not grace enough to submit to, and therefore every amendment must be opposed, as a deviation from the *Old Plan*. Still, glory be to God, the good cause prospers abundantly, and where one friend fails in his attachments to it, two or three are raised up to support it.

Your artful manner of bringing forward, page 7. the "civil harmony between Church and State," is only treading the old beaten path, which many of your Brethren and Fathers in the science of Priestcraft have trodden before you. We know your meaning! And we know also how to separate the precious from the vile. We can be good Subjects to the Laws of our Country, without entangling ourselves with the yoke

yoke of prelatical bondage. We love, reverence, and sincerely pray for our King, although we do not, like cringing vassals, passively submit to the UNWARRANTABLE USURPATION, of persecuting Church-men. We have read the histories of those restless spirits of persecuting memory, who flourished under Henry the eighth and his goodly daughters; and who were fostered by the Charleses and the Jameses. We remember how those covetous and ambitious Ecclesiastics hated and persecuted the Worthies of their day. The same principle remains to this day in certain courts; and as you justly observe, it is "to the lenity of the *Constitution*" that we are indebted for our present privileges.

As touching our "being guarded against infringements," I have answered on this head already. You shall enjoy unmolested, as an Officer of the State, the exclusive privilege of solemnizing matrimony. But the "most sacred rites" as you call them, which have been mentioned before, I have certainly as good a right to perform as you have; and I seriously advise you to be guarded against infringements, lest you provoke the Head of the Church to chastise you severely. I reserve what I have further to say on this head, 'till I see your reply.

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The confused manner in which you mention our right to use the Liturgy, would lead the reader to conclude, that *we must alter something in the Prayers*, in order to be permitted to use them. Whether you designed this confusion on purpose to mislead the unwary, I will not affirm; but you surely know, that we are under no such restraint. In page 11, you tell us, *we must alter in order to evade*. Alter what? the Prayers? Indeed, Sir, I will not alter one tittle of them. I have found my devotions enlivened, and my soul comforted hundreds of times in using them, both in public and private. And even when I do not read prayers before the sermon, I frequently express my petitions in the words of the Collects, Litany, &c. because I cannot, in general, make better. But to “evade”!—To evade what? the Bishop’s Court?—Here you appear *unmasked*! Good Sir, go to your length, and exemplify your principles. I cannot, indeed, I cannot, prevail upon myself to fear you in any sense of the word!

We know as well as you do, that in order to our being licensed, we must call ourselves Dissenters: And this will be no cause of glorying in the great day, to those who thus compel us, to look for faults in a Book that we greatly admire, in order to “evade”—

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the force of penal laws for using it. However, as it is a human composition, and consequently imperfect, we can easily find enough to object to, without altering the *Prayers*, which I really think, we are as much attached to as you are. My not being in the established Church, is not for want of an opportunity; nor by any means from a scruple of conscience respecting either the Church itself, or the mode of ordination; but for fear of becoming an *idle drone*! And such I must become in my own account, were I to be bound to be what is called *regular*. Only let me be permitted to gather such parts of my flock as chuse to attend, in different parts of the parish, on the most convenient nights in the week, that I may pray with them, preach to them, and inquire how they prosper in their spiritual warfare: Allow me to refuse the sacred elements of the Lord's Supper to open, deliberate sinners, and to deliver my own soul, in warning and exhorting my parishioners in every part of the parish, (for all cannot, and some will not come to Church) and I should rejoice to conform in every other respect to the established form of my country, which I am so far from opposing, that it has often grieved me, that I am forced to be counted an alien, in order to discharge the pastoral duties. What would St. Paul have said to Timothy or Titus had they lived and preached as most of the Ministers of
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the establishment do? I assure you, Sir, I am not personal in these remarks. I look into the word of God, and there see what sort of a character is given of a Minister of Christ. I then look around me in the world to find such. I bless the Lord, I have found many very excellent men both in the Church and among Dissenters, men of whose Grace, Abilities and Usefulness I have no doubt. But on looking more closely, what are these to the thousands of Clergymen who neither experience the power of the Gospel, nor live agreeable to its precepts! And even among those who do live, in some degree, under its benign influence, how few of them exert themselves in striving to convince sinners, and to build up the saints in their most holy faith, as they ought to do! The truth is, they dare not! You, Sir, are well acquainted with a very worthy Clergyman, who about twelve months ago, was so restrained by his Bishop, that he durst not even keep a religious meeting in the parsonage-house, in which he lived, on a Sunday evening!—He was set forth as a Methodist, though he had no connection with us, nor even believed the same opinions.—But he would not spend his time as others did. He endeavoured, not only to check vice, and set forth the Gospel in the pulpit; but likewise to live as a Christian Minister ought. Therefore some great men applied

to the Bishop, who obliged him either to neglect the people and thereby wound his own conscience, or to quit the parish. He chose the latter, though as strict in the principles of the Church as any Minister in England. When I think of such things as these, I tremble at the apprehension of being in so dreadful a state. I look forward to the awful hour when I must give in my accounts! I suppose myself to have been in a situation like your's; surrounded with opportunities of doing good. Perhaps, ten talents committed to your trust! I suppose myself to have preached twice every Lord's day; to have buried the dead, baptized the children, churched the women, visited the sick, and administered the Lord's Supper, And what then? O Sir, whatever others may think, you know all this may be done without a spark of real religion, and without entering at all into the spirit of the ministry. What if in that tremendous day, some unhappy souls should appeal to the Judge, that they lived in my parish, came now and then to Church, and wished sometimes to be good; but that I never took any pains to instruct them in private, to rouse them out of their carelessness, and to bring them to Christ.—While these wretched spirits depart accursed, good heavens, what must become of me! Will it suffice to tell the Judge, that I avoided all scandalous sins; that I regularly preached, or read good sermons on the Lord's day; that I did the duty
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of the parish better than most around me did theirs; and that I took care to guard the people against Enthusiasts, Dissenters, and Lay-Preachers? Alas! Sir, it will not do. The words of the Lord are express: Ezek. 33. 8.—“ If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, **BUT HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND.**” Shall then any one professing to be a Minister of Christ be at ease, most, if not all the week, go through the common service on Sundays, call it *doing duty*, and go with great reluctance to see a sick person, especially if at a distance, or in a poor noisome place? Or, when he has done all this, trust in it for salvation? I say nothing of those who have thousands a year, and do nothing, or next to, or worse than nothing; from my very soul I pity these. But I now speak of many that are tolerably diligent in the parochial duties, and yet suffer many of their people to perish for want of *proper warning*. What a sentence! I feel it strike upon my very heart,—*His blood will I require at thine hand!* How many souls have gone into eternity since you and I have been in the Ministry! Surely it behoveth you and me, often, and closely, to examine ourselves, whether we are clear of the blood of all these. If the careless Watch-

man must be punished with an additional degree of torment, for every soul he has suffered to perish through his neglect, what degrees of torture will some have to endure ! The punishment increased for every damned spirit ! O what scenes of misery ! what damnations multiplied by thousands will numbers have to undergo ! I pray God assist us to be in earnest, that we may escape !

I have been led a little from my subject ; but I do not think what I have said needs any apology. I wish I could conclude here ; but I must take notice of a few more of your sentences.

The last part of page 11, is almost beneath my attention. It is the produce of a soil no way favourable to the Tree of Life. The roots of bitterness spring up in such a manner, that I must be defiled, if I do not pass on. Besides, it is, in effect, answered already.

In page 12, you become a " judge of evil thoughts." You positively assert what our opinions are, and begin to reason upon them, without the least proof. The young Gentleman who read Prayers the morning the Chapel was opened, altered the petition respecting " Bishops, Priests, and Deacons," and read " All the Ministers

Ministers of the Gospel." You take it for granted, which is absolutely false, that this was done by joint consent, and that it was to be continued so, on the supposition that we must make some alteration. I have observed already, that I never alter any thing in the Prayers. I was exceedingly grieved when I heard the alteration, which I knew nothing of 'till it came from the desk. I as much disapprove of it as you do, and of the other alteration too, namely, putting in *untimely* death instead of *sudden*. However, it will be readily excused by candid people, when they are informed, that in a neighbouring Chapel, where that Gentleman sometimes officiated, those petitions, I am told, are so worded. And I am certain had you, Sir, taken the trouble of mentioning this matter to any of us, you would have received the utmost satisfaction.—But that would not have answered *your purpose*, which is too glaring throughout your piece, to need any explanation! What you expect to gain by it, I will not even *suspect*; but I cannot keep a certain fable out of my mind, which by a kind of natural association, occurs with the reading of your pamphlet. Perhaps, in my next, (for I do not intend to have done with you yet) I may tell you what it is.

One clause in page 15, I must quote at length, because it is rather of a scandalous nature.—“ I know, and can prove, that it was the business of the proprietors of your Chapel, when soliciting subscriptions, to win generosity by the bait, the *alluring* bait, of friendship to the established Church.” I have carefully inquired into this matter, and find the simple fact is as follows: The Gentlemen, whom you, I hope not with a bad *design*, call proprietors, that is, the Trustees of the Chapel, (which is virtually settled upon the Conference plan) in endeavouring to get subscriptions, were, of course, asked what Ministers were to officiate in it, and of what kind the service was to be, &c. The answer was, as the subscription-paper will demonstrate, “ Service will be performed every Sabbath-day, morning and evening, and on such days of the week as may hereafter be agreed on. Trustees are appointed to inspect the building of the Chapel, who will also provide Preachers from the METHODIST-CONFERENCE, and Gownsmen as often as possible.” Now, Sir, what bait is there in this to *allure* any one? Is not every word of it true? Did not you know in your conscience that it was true, when you threw out the *bait*, in the above clause, to *allure* the world into a belief that the Trustees had deceived the Subscribers? If you

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can prove that what is here delivered is not true, do so, and let them answer you whom it concerns. I quote verbatim from the Paper which was carried about, and shewn to all that were solicited to subscribe, and I question whether you yourself have not seen that very paper!!! If so, was it ingenuous of you to write as you have done? But you seem to know the way of the world, Throw dirt enough and some of it will stick. There is not one word of what was held out to the subscribers but what is literally true. The service of the Church is used every Sabbath-day. Wednesday Evening is the time fixed on for the weekly lecture. The Methodist Conference appointed four of us to preach there, in turn with the other Chapels in this Circuit. And we will get "Gownsmen as often as possible." What then becomes of your sarcastic raillery concerning our zealous attachment to the Church? It is very true, we distinguish betwixt the Church and many of her Sons, who give us continual cause to lament the deplorable state of the people that are left to their mercy. We shew our attachment to the CHURCH, by using her Liturgy; and we sincerely pray to God so "to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of his word; that both by their preaching and living, they may

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set it forth, and shew it accordingly." Yea, that they may so preach and live, as to render our labours unnecessary. This is the best way to conquer Methodists! 'Till you do this, I pray do not hinder us to do all the good we can. Indeed, blessed be God, you cannot hinder us. But you may render yourself ridiculous and contemptible, by making the attempt.

As to our "mode of preaching," I do not conceive why that is brought in. I do not say, that we can preach so well as you can. I leave it to our hearers to judge for themselves. I pray God forgive me, for not preaching better than I do. However, if our poor endeavours be owned by our Lord Jesus Christ, and if immortal souls be turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," we will give *him* the glory, and rejoice in being nothing, that *he* may be all in all. We know there are good *memoriter* preachers, and preachers as good, *who use notes*. And I never wish to preach with greater energy, than I have heard D. S. in Bristol Cathedral, when every word of his sermon was written before him. And with respect to *extemporary preaching*, in the proper sense of the word, I think none but fools, or worse, pretend to it. For my own part, I do not believe there is any such thing. At
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the same time, I conceive a very mean opinion of a Minister, that cannot preach at any time without a book, unless he be unwell, or has lost his memory. A Divine that lives in the spirit of his office, can hardly be taken *unprepared* to preach the Gospel. But when he has to preach occasional sermons it alters the case; he is then at liberty, or ought to be, to chuse what mode he pleases.

With regard to our *Doctrines*, I think you act wisely, in not entering *presumptuously* into a controversy about them. I do not think you would gain much credit by so doing! One thing I must observe; namely, I will undertake to prove, that all the doctrines that I ever advance, are the doctrines of the Church of England. If you knew this, how durst you throw out such illiberal innuendos to the contrary! If you think they are not, bring forth your strong arguments, and let our readers judge between us. 1 Kings, 18. 21. I certainly have labour enough to go through, having nine or ten, sometimes fourteen or fifteen times a week to preach, and a good deal of riding in the country; besides the care of the Societies; but that shall be no excuse. You have made use of absolute language,
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and if you refuse to vindicate what you have asserted, I shall take it for granted you are not able.

What you advance in the conclusion of the 19th page is, to say the least, a mistake. Neither I nor any of my colleagues ever *assumed* the character "of the clergy of the Church;" consequently no member of our own society could ever expostulate with us on such a conduct.

That some of our members, for reasons which may be explained in future, were displeased at our putting on the "sacerdotal vestments," as you call them, is true, and therefore none of us have put them on since the day the Chapel was opened, though many are displeased that we do not. The fact is, some of the Trustees, not thinking any harm, provided a Gown and Surplice, as they had a right to do if they pleased, and desired those of us who were to officiate to wear them. We did so, though with great reluctance, fearing some of our friends would not be pleased. The Friday after, the Trustees met, and among other things, the wearing of the Gown, &c. was talked of, and I verily believe, it was what I said against it, that influenced those who were for it, to give it up

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for the present. But there was no expostulation, much less threatening to withdraw from the connection that I know of, on account of it. I believe our people have more sense, and grace than to withdraw for such trifles. Besides, if this had been the case, what was that to *you*? As you seem so displeased about the service in the Chapel, and intimate that you do not believe our doctrines, the sooner we fell out, the sooner you would obtain what you seem to wish. And surely, if we would not hearken to some of our own "*principal members*," you cannot imagine that a Letter of *your's*, written in such a spirit, would have any weight with *us*; especially, when addressed to us in such a manner! I am therefore filled with wonder, at an address from *you* on the occasion, either *without*, or *with an apology*!

Upon the whole, what could you, Sir, the "Minister of Westbury-upon-Trym," have in view in addressing the *poor Methodist-Preachers*, as you have done? Was it with an eye to our present and eternal welfare? believe it who can! Was it with an intention to frighten us? what glory would that bring you?

"Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!"

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As it happens, you did not know us. Some of us have had to do with too many of your stamp to be so easily frightened! PERSECUTION may *kill* us; but IT CANNOT CONQUER US!

- “ By *force* *beasts* act and are by force restrain’d;
- “ The *human mind* by *gentle means* is gain’d.
- “ Thou canst not take, what I refuse to yield:
- “ Nor reap the harvest, tho’ thou spoilst the field.”

Perhaps, you thought (for every man is not a judge of his own writings) that you had written in a loving spirit, and that your *Six-penny-worth* would *allure* us into a flexile compliance with whatever proposals you might see good to make; suppose for instance, to let you have our Chapel to be a “ Chapel of *Ease*” to “ Westbury-upon-Trym!” Alas, Sir, you must not think to catch old birds with chaff! If you think proper to rouse your dormant zeal, and to build a *Chapel of Ease* on the hill, we shall be very far from having any objection; and very probably, some of the staunch Talkers for the *Old Plan* will join you, and come and *ease themselves* in it. The Methodist discipline is not pleasing to flesh and blood; therefore I do not wonder that many leave us, and chuse a smother

smoother path. Mean time, I advise you to beware of hurting the cause of religion in the world. If we had erred, you have not taken the way to reclaim us.—You have endeavoured, though in vain, to make us appear as deceivers in the esteem of an ungodly world! Whether *passion* or *interest* was the motive by which you were influenced, I cannot say; but which ever it was, or suppose it simple *vanity* or *caprice*, remember, Sir, you cannot wound the character of a Servant of Jesus Christ, without wounding the Master through the Servant's side. None of us ever thought of injuring *you*, in *act*, *word*, or *thought*. We meant to go quietly on our way, doing what we could for the souls for whom the Saviour died. If you should by your *unguarded*, or *designedly ill-natured* Letter, hinder any of us in the blessed work, we will go upon our bended knees to the Son of God; we will spread your writings before him, and appeal to his tribunal, that we were striving to bring sinners to him, and you would not suffer us. Consider, Sir, what you are doing, and pray to the Almighty for grace to enable you to be in earnest for Eternity! I am not afraid to meet you at the bar of Christ. And there I shall meet you, God only knows how soon. For the present I

leave

leave you to your own reflections, which cannot be
very pleasing if your conscience be truly awake!

Wishing you every blessing of the Gospel of our
Lord Jesus Christ,

I AM,

REVEREND SIR,

Your affectionate Servant,

SAMUEL BRADBURN.

No. 5, SOUTHWELL-STREET,

KINGSDOWN, Sept. 22, 1792.

THE END.

